

Families' in shock at death

TRAVELLERS at Dale Farm have spoken of their sadness at Corin Redgrave's death.

Richard Sheridan, 41, spokesman for the families facing eviction at Dale Farm, said: "It was very sad to hear this."

"He was a very good friend and fought hard for everyone at the site. I will be at his funeral."

Grattan Puxon, 72, a lead campaigner for the site, who was at Westminster School with Mr Redgrave, spoke of his shock.

He said: "He was a great friend of Dale Farm, as is his wife Kika."

"He fought very hard for everyone here, and I was only updating him about the situation a few weeks ago."

"Although he didn't come to the site after the heart attack, he kept an avid interest."

350 to form human shield

MORE than 350 people have signed up to form the human shield bid to save Dale Farm dreamed up by Corin Redgrave.

Grattan Puxon, lead campaigner for the site, said: "This idea was the brainchild of Corin and Vanessa."

"We have 350 people to come and form the human shield if necessary."

Travellers from the site are also preparing to go head-to-head with the council at Basildon County Court after being offered traditional housing as accommodation, if they are evicted, instead of alternative caravan pitches.

Film star champion of travellers' rights dies



■ Friend of Dale Farm – MP Nick Harvey, Corin Redgrave and Kathleen McCarthy at the Commons meeting in a bid to stop the evictions

Picture: JON AUSTIN

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STAGE and screen star Corin Redgrave, who once suffered a heart attack while championing the rights of travellers in Basildon, has died aged 70.

The Four Weddings and a Funeral star was taken ill at his London home in the early hours of Sunday morning, before dying yesterday.

Mr Redgrave and sister Vanessa Redgrave were ardent supporters of the campaign by hundreds of

□ Actor suffered heart attack at council meeting
□ 70-year-old never fully recovered after collapse

families fighting to stay on illegally-built caravan pitches, at the controversial Dale Farm travellers site, in Crays Hill.

In June 2005, his collapse from a heart attack in a Basildon Council development control meeting in the Towngate Theatre made national headlines.

He was making a passionate plea to councillors not to evict the families when he keeled over, before being given emergency treatment at Basildon Hospital.

The meeting was adjourned for two weeks, but when it resumed councillors voted to carry out the large-scale evictions, which have yet to take place.

The council confirmed yesterday it has still to serve notices giving the families 28 days to leave.

Mr Redgrave and his sister later thought up the idea to put a

human shield around the camp in the event of an eviction attempt.

Speaking to the Echo just weeks ago, Mr Redgrave said he still supported the plight of families at Dale Farm, and was taking a keen interest in developments with the council's bid to evict them.

His widow Kika Markham said: "He died very peacefully, surrounded by his family. We will miss him so very much."

He never fully recovered from the heart attack, but did return to the stage.